

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Rumania

SUBJECT Reception of Western Broadcasts

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1. Although Rumanians were forbidden to listen to non-Soviet broadcasts, they were able to listen clandestinely. The most generally heard were Western broadcasts, especially those of VOA and BBC. People listened more often to VOA because the reception for this program was clearer than for BBC. I have no idea, however, just how many Rumanians were able to hear Western broadcasts.
2. Usually Rumanians listened to forbidden radio programs at night (the only time VOA could be heard). Reception was better at this time, and since the majority of people worked during the day, the only possible time for them to listen was in the evening. People would sometimes listen to these programs in groups, but only if they trusted one another. Even when families listened by themselves they took extreme care that their children should not be present or overhear. This unnatural precaution was necessary because parents actually feared that their children (particularly children who were Pioneer members, a Communist sponsored youth group) would report them to the authorities.
3. A great hindrance to hearing Western broadcasts was the shortage of radio sets capable of receiving other than local stations. It was impossible to hear Western broadcasts on the only available new radio sets, the Soviet-manufactured Pionir. These two circumstances enormously cut down the percentage of people who had an opportunity to hear Western propaganda via their radios.
4. Another obstacle to the reception of Western broadcasts was the existence of jamming. The Rumanian Security Service (Siguranta) operated, I heard, about 500 jamming stations in Rumania. These stations covered all main "counties"; in each "county" the larger towns contained two or more stations whose duty it was to prevent any Western programs from coming through clearly. But since VOA worked on a variable band, jamming was not too effective. For instance the whole VOA program, despite elaborate jamming measures, could be heard in Constanta, Giurgiu and aboard Danube vessels.

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6. Besides faulty and scarce radio sets, jamming, and fear of neighbor's observation, listening to Western radio broadcasts in Rumania was further hindered by the Shortwaves Amateurs Association (Asociatia Amatorilor Unde Scurte). This amateur radio transmitter organization was required by the government to constantly be on the look out for clandestine radio transmitters. The organization was started after 1950; before that time amateur radio transmission was forbidden. Candidates for this organization were carefully screened for political reliability. When they became members they were urged to work with their counterparts in the USSR "in order to learn the superior Soviet technique". The headquarters of this radio society was in Bucharest and was subordinated to the Ministry of Communications (Ministerul Comunicatiilor). I believe that there were no more than 20 licensed members of this organization in the whole country.

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